Challenges, Choices, and Changes for the EIA:
Charter of the Energy Information Administration External Study Team
(April 19, 2005)

I.   Background

The external study team will address an Office of Management and Budget requirement for a program-wide independent evaluation of the Energy Information Administration (EIA). EIA senior managers will use the results to help determine how EIA should focus its resources in the next five years to provide relevant energy information to policymakers, the marketplace, and to the public. The results of the study will provide input to EIA's budgeting and strategic planning processes.

II.   External Study Team Composition and Independence

The team will consist of five members, one of whom will serve as the leader. The leader, who is selected by EIA, selects the other team members.   Team members will be compensated through honoraria to be paid by EIA. Members will work primarily at their own locations, with one meeting at EIA's Washington office in September or October (date and length of time to accommodate team member schedules and the work to be done). EIA estimates that about 100 hours of work time would be required from each member (not including travel) and that the leader's work time would be about 125 hours, over a period of about eight months.

The team is independent of EIA. It will provide its recommendations to the Administrator of EIA in a final report. Individual team members will compare and synthesize their responses to the study questions at a meeting in September or October in Washington, D.C. The final report will contain team's consensus recommendations, supporting documentation and rationale.
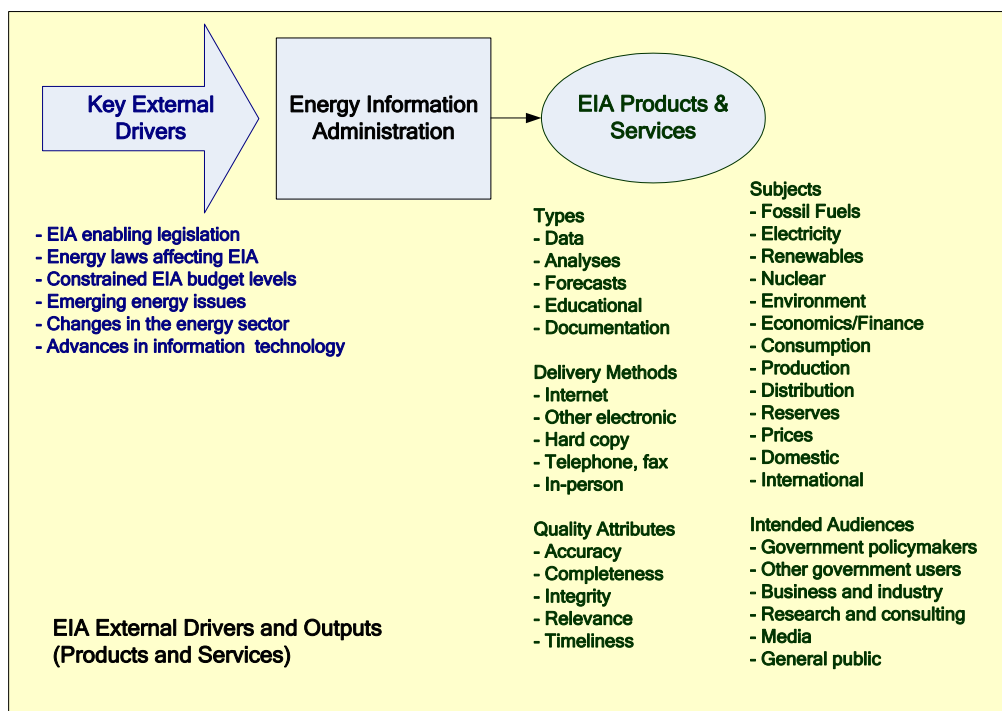
III.   Objective

The primary objective of the team is to provide consensus advice to EIA concerning these overarching questions:
* *Given continuing tight EIA budgets and other external drivers, is EIA doing the "right" things?*
* *What are the "right" things EIA should do over the next five years?*
The final report to the EIA Administrator will contain the team's consensus recommendations and rationale, along with a discussion of important issues. It will be a public document.

IV.   Scope

The study will focus on EIA's outputs (i.e., its products and services), potential outputs, its specific program areas and their relationships, and its key external drivers. EIA's internal business processes, management practices and systems are not within the scope of this study. The planning horizon is five years.

Key External Drivers → Energy Information Administration → EIA Products & Services

- EIA enabling legislation
- Energy laws affecting EIA
- Constrained EIA budget levels
- Emerging energy issues
- Changes in the energy sector
- Advances in information technology

EIA External Drivers and Outputs (Products and Services)

Types
- Data
- Analyses
- Forecasts
- Educational
- Documentation

Delivery Methods
- Internet
- Other electronic
- Hard copy
- Telephone, fax
- In-person

Quality Attributes
- Accuracy
- Completeness
- Integrity
- Relevance
- Timeliness

Subjects
- Fossil Fuels
- Electricity
- Renewables
- Nuclear
- Environment
- Economics/Finance
- Consumption
- Production
- Distribution
- Reserves
- Prices
- Domestic
- International

Intended Audiences
- Government policymakers
- Other government users
- Business and industry
- Research and consulting
- Media
- General public

V.   Proposed Schedule of Activities

Activity	Schedule
Team forms and EIA provides background materials.	By May 15, 2005
Team conducts study; members individually address overarching study questions as well as subsidiary questions deemed important by the team.	Summer - Fall 2005
Members participate in development of consensus recommendations and supporting rationales at a meeting to be held in Washington, DC.	2 or 3 days in September or October 2005
Team delivers final report to EIA.	January 2006

VI.   Responsibilities of EIA and the External Study Team Members

EIA
- Identify study team leader
- Provide study questions and background materials[1]
- Provide any additional information requested by team members throughout the study
- Provide logistical support for the team meeting at EIA in September or October 2005

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[1] The background materials will describe EIA's mission, legal framework, budget, organizational structure, data collection, analysis, educational and dissemination programs, products, services and customers. Electronic links to actual documents will also be provided.

- Support discussions at the fall meeting, providing information and/or briefings requested by the team
- Provide drafting support for the final report as requested by the study team
- Respond to study team recommendations

Study Team Leader
- Select the other four members of the study team
- Work with EIA to clarify the purpose of the study, meetings needed, the list of questions to be addressed, and background information to be provided.
- Clarify issues with other team members
- Conduct research to answer study questions
- Prepare an individual response to study questions before the fall meeting at EIA
- Chair the discussions at the fall meeting
- Direct EIA support staff in providing drafting services for the final report as desired by the team
- Provide a set of team consensus recommendations to EIA

Other Study Team Members
- Conduct research to answer study questions
- Prepare individual responses to the study questions before the fall meeting at EIA
- Participate in discussions at the fall meeting
- Provide input to the final report
- Provide a set of team consensus recommendations to EIA

VII. Resources

EIA will provide background materials prior to the startup of the study. The external study team will be supported by a group of EIA senior employees who will be available to provide technical and administrative support upon request throughout the study. The EIA support team is also available to assist in drafting materials for the external study team's final report.

VIII. Additional Guidance

The following questions are subsidiary to the overarching questions. These questions, as well as any additional ones considered important by the team, should also be addressed in the report:

1. *Is EIA addressing the "right" energy questions?*
   a. What will be the major energy issues facing the United States in the next five years?
      (1). How will EIA's current activities produce useful information related to those issues?
      (2). What better information should EIA provide on upcoming issues?
   b. What kinds of questions should EIA prepare itself to answer in the next five years?
   c. To what extent is EIA fulfilling its legislative mandate to maintain a comprehensive energy information system?

2. *Is EIA providing the "right" products and services?*
   a. Overall, is EIA adequately covering key energy subjects and current issues? What subject areas should be given more or less attention in the future?
   b. What should be the proper balance between data, analysis, forecasting, education and documentation in the future?
   c. Are there data series and/or analysis and forecasting efforts that should be changed or discontinued?
   d. What level and type of analytical work should EIA do to maintain the quality and relevance of its data, and what alternatives could EIA pursue?
   e. Are EIA's dissemination methods comprehensive and accessible enough for our primary users? What, if any, changes do you recommend?
   f. To what degree are the quality attributes of our products adequate to meet our customers' needs?